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## **Long-term recovery committee chair receives Governor's points of light award for volunteer efforts**

**Lincoln, Neb.** – Kristina Churchill, chair of the Long-Term Recovery Committee (LTRC) was honored with the Governor's Points of Light Adult Award from Governor Dave Heineman, May 16, at a ceremony in the Warner Chamber at the State Capitol. State Senator Lydia Brasch accepted on Kristina's behalf. The awards are sponsored by ServeNebraska and presented quarterly in recognition of volunteers who give their time, talent and energy to help Nebraskans build stronger communities.

The flooding of 2011 affected hundreds of Nebraska residents along the Missouri River. As news that releases from the Gavin's Point dam would reach 150,000 cubic feet per second—three times the peak release levels of prior years—Kristina Churchill began to ask what she could do. Her concern for people in Washington County led her to organize a Long-Term Recovery Committee (LTRC) for the county. The work of this LTRC since May of 2011 has been inspiring.

Kristina formed the committee by reaching out to community organizations, voluntary agencies and private businesses to organize a highly effective volunteer effort that has impacted many lives in Washington County. To assist flood-impacted citizens the LTRC:

- Provided a semi-truck full of boxes and tape to allow people to save their belongings before the flood waters arrived.
- Found long-term housing for 144 displaced people at the Holling Residence Hall on the former Dana College campus.
- Assigned a food coordinator to provide at least one hot meal a day to those in Holling and reached out to churches and businesses within a 50-mile radius of the campus to provide volunteer assistance in serving 8,500 meals during the 3-month displacement.
- Organized a Facebook page to give Washington County residents one-stop access to disaster response and recovery information.
- Reached out to faith-based organizations, businesses and The Orphan Grain Train who rallied to provide meals, muck outs, major clean-up, debris removal, and spiritual and emotional care.
- Coordinated delivery of an UMCOR Case Management training class for the LTRC and other community groups involved in case management.
- Asked numerous large businesses including Cargill, Mack and Elcano to provide volunteers for clean-up efforts.
- Held a fundraiser with Thrivent that raised \$65,000 allowing the LTRC to assist with unmet needs for housing, utilities, food and clothing.

Kristina exemplifies the best qualities of a true servant leader. Her enthusiasm, commitment and drive helped to mobilize a vibrant coalition of community organizations, businesses and faith-based and voluntary organizations. Their work made a huge difference to the citizens of Washington County. Under Kristina's leadership, the LTRC continues to provide disaster affected families and individuals with needed support in the form of financial assistance, donations of furniture and clothing, and voluntary assistance for clean-up and minor home repairs. Kristina and the Washington County LTRC is a model for other counties within Nebraska and the nation.

Also recognized at the ceremony and receiving the Youth Award was Nicki Ahlschwede, high school senior at for her volunteer efforts with the Lincoln Youth Volunteers group who plan and develop their own volunteer projects to address various needs in the Lincoln community. The Group Award was presented to Life-Link Nebraska a transitional program for youth with disabilities, ages 18-21 on the campus of Western Nebraska Community College in Scottsbluff.

To nominate individuals and groups for the Governor's Points of Light Awards who have made a difference through volunteerism, visit the ServeNebraska website at [www.serve.nebraska.gov](http://www.serve.nebraska.gov) or call Kimberle Hall 800-291-8911 or 402-471-6228. The next nomination deadline is June 15, 2012.

ServeNebraska pursues its mission of mobilizing Nebraskans to strengthen their communities through volunteering, collaboration and national service programs.

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